

What's particularly troubling, is that at the same time as it is building its nuclear program, Iran has continued to threaten its neighbors. It has armed and funded Hezbollah and Hamas, which are dedicated to eradicating the state of Israel. In 2005, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that Israel should be wiped off the face of the map. In 2008, he said: "The people of the region would not miss the narrowest opportunity to annihilate this false regime."

But Israel is not Iran's only target. In November a senior commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard threatened to bomb NATO bases in Turkey. Iran is currently threatening to close the straits of Hormuz, which will affect shipping, with particular impact on the crude oil exported from Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq and liquid natural gas from Qatar.

Given Iran's success in developing a nuclear program, a number of its neighbors have suggested that they may follow suit, creating further instability in the region. Earlier this month, Turki al-Faisal, who has served as the Saudi intelligence chief and as ambassador to the United States, suggested that Saudi Arabia may seek nuclear weapons. Wikileaks revealed that Egypt's leaders told U.S. officials that Egypt would acquire nuclear weapons if Iran did. This lends greater urgency to the need to persuade Iran to end its nuclear ambitions.

Nuclear weapons are particularly threatening when held by a nation whose leaders have no apparent respect for human life. Iran has an unrivaled record of human rights abuses, from the imprisonment of people of the Ba'hai faith, to the use of the death penalty against minors, to the use of torture and amputation against prisoners, to discrimination against women, to the suppression and murder of members of the democracy movement. With thousands of its citizens murdered, tortured or imprisoned, Iran's record of human rights abuses is among the worst in the world.

History shows that when dictators threaten their neighbors, there's good reason to fear. And given Iran's history of threats, its dedicated progress in enriching uranium, its evident determination to hide its nuclear program from the world and its abysmal human rights record, the world should do everything possible to hinder it from obtaining nuclear weapons.

That's why I strongly support H.R. 1905, the Iran Threat Reduction Act, which would implement a commonsense enhancement of existing sanctions—by providing greater options to sanction entities doing business with the Central Bank of Iran; by expanding the types petroleum-related activities that could trigger sanctions to include certain petroleum resource agreements with Iran, purchasing Iranian debt and supporting port facility construction and management; by imposing sanctions on individuals involved in human rights abuses or terrorism; by imposing sanctions on those who do business with Iran's Revolutionary Guard; by allowing states or other organizations to divest from Iran; by identifying those entities that are helping Iran evade sanctions, among other things.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting in support of H.R. 1905.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 931, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

IN OPPOSITION OF IMPLICATIONS TO MEDICAL RESEARCH IN H.R. 1254

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a possible unintentional consequence of H.R. 1254, the Synthetic Drug Control Act of 2011. This legislation would add two categories of synthetic drugs to the list of Schedule I controlled substances.

While I am troubled by news reports involving these drugs and I support restrictions on the sale of these chemicals for purposes of illicit use, I am concerned about the impact the ban would impose on legitimate scientific research, including much needed medical advances.

To maintain our position in the world as the leader in the research and development of pharmaceuticals, we must ensure that researchers have access to the compounds necessary to discover and create new drugs. We cannot afford to stifle these advancements. At a time when other countries continue to make gains in medical research, we must make certain our researchers have all available means necessary to further their studies and uphold our competitive edge.

If enacted into law, should this measure hinder any progress in the arena of medical research, I would urge Congress to re-examine this issue in a way that protects public health while continuing to make much needed medical advancements possible. In the meantime, I would also urge my colleagues in the Senate to thoroughly examine this issue during any consideration of H.R. 1254 or a similar legislative proposal.

HONORING CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT DAVID W. PARKER

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to commend to the House the outstanding contributions of Chief Master Sergeant David W. Parker who recently retired after thirty-two years of service with the Ohio Air National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing.

Chief Parker enlisted in the Ohio Air National Guard on December 31, 1979, and began basic training in February, 1980. He started as an Electronic Warfare Specialist in the Electronic Counter Measures Shop in the Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

There he earned the rank of Technical Sergeant.

In 1994, Chief Parker was chosen as one of only three members of the 180th to be part of the Combined Task Force at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, where he was part of a team that provided electronic countermeasures maintenance support.

In 1995, he was promoted to Master Sergeant. In 1998, he was selected First Sergeant of the Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. He was named the Enlisted Association's First Sergeant of the Year in 1998 and the 180th Fighter Wing First Sergeant of the Year in both 1998 and 2004.

He became Senior Master Sergeant in 2005 and Chief Master Sergeant in 2008. In 2010 he became the NCOIC of Student Flight, a position he held until retirement.

Throughout his career, Chief Parker was deployed numerous times, including such locations as Cold Lake, Canada; Incirlik Air Base, Turkey; Balad Air Base, Iraq; and Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.

Chief Parker also received copious awards during his thirty-two years of service including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Small Arms Marksmanship Ribbon, the Ohio Commendation Medal, and the Ohio Award of Merit.

Chief Master Sergeant David W. Parker's long and distinguished career with the Ohio Air National Guard is a shining example to all who volunteer and serve. I am proud to wish him and his family every success as they move on to a new chapter in their lives.

CURBING CONGRESSIONAL BENEFITS

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing two more pieces of legislation to curb the benefits currently available to Members of Congress.

The first ends the automatic pay increase privilege for Members of Congress. In 1989, Congress established the current formula for automatic annual salary adjustments under the Ethics Reform Act. The formula is based on the Employment Cost Index which tracks changes in private sector wages and salaries. Unless Congress passes a law blocking it, the adjustment goes into effect automatically.

The current system is set up to allow Members of Congress to receive pay raises without having to cast recorded votes for them and that is just wrong. Requiring recorded votes on pay increases will not only make the actions of Congress more transparent but it is another step that will make Congress more accountable to the citizens who elect them.

Another benefit available to Members is lifetime eligibility for service in Congress. A lifetime of service in Congress is, I believe, far too insulating and privileged to assure us that our Representatives are firmly empathetic to and aligned with the needs of the American people. But given the significance of seniority in Congress, States that encourage their members to pledge to limit their terms voluntarily are at a disadvantage with States that